

Outside Peer Evaluations

A minimum of six letters from outside the University assessing the candidate's accomplishments is required: Department chairs should expect to provide the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs with a list of ten names together with brief CV's obtained from the web – no reviewer should be directly contacted at this point. Only eight will be contacted initially. The chair of the department should discuss the list of eight potential peer reviewers with the Senior Associate Dean before letters are solicited. If the original list should prove unsuccessful, the chair of the department should consult further with the Senior Associate Dean.

1. The candidate should offer a short list of potential reviewers (at least three) to the department chair. Potential reviewers will be contacted by the department, not the candidate.
2. The tenured faculty at the rank about the rank of the candidate should develop a separate list of its own involving no consultation with the candidate.
3. At least three letters must be procured from the departmental list. Preferably three letters should be procured from the candidate's list.

External reviewers should be sent an appropriate sample of the candidate's published (including accepted but not in print) work. For candidates with a book publication this must include the book and should include a small sample of other published work since arriving at SMU. For candidates with peer reviewed journal articles only (no book), a substantial portion of their published work since arriving at SMU should constitute the body of work sent to the reviewers. In some cases it may be appropriate to send out unpublished work. This could include the unpublished portions of a second book or manuscript or a single submitted journal article. The primary purpose of including this material in the sample sent to the external reviewers is to indicate future research directions. Both the candidate and the department must agree on the body of work sent out to the external reviewers.

Guidelines for external reviewer choices: No co-authors, no close collaborators, no thesis/dissertation committee members, no former instructors, no more than two from the same University, no fewer than 6 Universities. In the case of promotion to Full Professor: no one below the rank of Full Professor. In the case of promotion to Associate Professor: no newly minted Associate Professors and at the most two Associate Professors. Reviewers should hold tenure in an institution with research standards at least as high as SMU's. Exceptions to these requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A brief statement should be included which includes:

1. How the outside reviewers were selected;
2. The relevant qualifications of the outside reviewers;
3. Which reviewers did not write letters along with explanations of why (never responded to the initial request, agreed to write but never did, . . .);
4. A copy of the letter soliciting the recommendation;
5. A CV of each reviewer (reviewer CV's should provide sufficient information to determine qualifications but need not be exhaustive – a condensed version of the CV will suffice). The CV should immediately follow all the peer review letters in and should be preceded by color coded paper (see example binder).

Ask reviewers to:

1. Describe your relationship/interaction with the candidate;
2. Assess the quality of the candidate's publications and significance of his/her research and contributions to the field.
3. Compare the candidate with others at a similar career stage;
4. Assess the likelihood of continued development and productivity by the candidate.

Selection Procedure for External Evaluations

Names of distinguished specialists for external evaluations were solicited from Professor XYZ and members of the department. All names submitted are listed below.

Professor XYZ submitted the following list of potential external reviewers:

Professor Astronomy John Stargazer, University of Michigan
Professor of Astronomy Sam Slate, University of Washington, Seattle
Professor of Astronomy Ernst Young, Stanford University
Professor of Astronomy Susan Fielden, Washington University
Research Scientist, Stanley Steamer, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Professor of Astronomy Diane Lander, University of New Orleans

Of these, Professors Stargazer and Young agreed to write while the other four declined. Professors Slate and Fielden declined because of too many existing obligations, while Dr. Steamer declined due to health issues. Professor Lander declined as she was on sabbatical.

After reviewing Professor XYZ's list, the department and/or full professor review committee, submitted the following list:

Professor of Astronomy Mick Kirk, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Professor of Astronomy Burke Williams, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Professor of Astronomy Jose Kalua, University of California, Los Angeles
Professor of Astronomy Linda Leverton, University of Pennsylvania
Professor of Astronomy Ethridge Miles, Emory University

All of the above reviewers accepted the invitation to review Professor XYZ's research.

The final group of xxxx scholars who agreed to write evaluation letters for Professor XYZ appears below:

Final List

- *Mick Kirk, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- *Burke Williams, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
John Stargazer, University of Michigan
- *Jose Kalua, University of California, Los Angeles
Ernst Young, Stanford University
- *Linda Leverton, University of Pennsylvania
- *Ethridge Miles, Emory University

*Chosen by tenured faculty of the department and/or full professor committee

Sample Letter

May 7, 2008

Professor Mary Beth Gonzales
Department of XXXX
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Professor Gonzales:

I am writing to ask you to evaluate the scholarship of Professor John Z. Doe, who is a candidate for promotion to associate professor with tenure at Southern Methodist University. We are interested in your assessment of Professor Doe as a scholar. What is the quality of the Candidate's publications? What contribution has the Candidate made in the field? How would you rate the Candidate's scholarship as compared to that of others at a similar stage in their careers? Does the Candidate seem to be building a research career that can and will continue? Additionally, please describe your relationship to the Candidate, if any. I am enclosing a copy of Professor Doe's recent book, *The History of America*, together with the Candidate's four most recent scholarly articles. I also enclose the Candidate's *curriculum vitae*, and I will be happy to send to you a copy of anything listed on it.

Within the limits of the law, SMU will do all in its power to keep your letter confidential.

Thank you very much for your willingness to undertake this most important task. It is a true service both to SMU and to the field of Astronomy. To complete our deliberations on time, we will need your letter by XXX, 2007. Also, with your letter, please include a current curriculum vitae, a condensed version is acceptable.

Sincerely,

Marion Smith, Professor
Chair